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The company's present capacity is 800 tons of beet per day. The beet pulp is dehydrated for use as animal fodder and about 600 tons were exported in 1953.

Raw sugar is imported from the West Indies, South America and Formosa. In 1952, imports of 16,400 tons produced about 15,000 tons of refined sugar; in 1953 imports rose to 24,000 tons, producing about 22,200 tons of refined sugar.

The total 1952 and 1953 production of refined sugar was 19,200 and 30,000 metric tons respectively. An average yield of about 14% refined sugar is obtained from beet sugar and 91.5% of refined sugar from the raw sugar.

The imported raw sugar is taxed at 27.5 piasters per kg., while the corresponding tax on imported refined sugar is 43.5 piasters. The price of refined sugar at the time of the mission's visit was 85 piasters per kg. Although the law provides for tax rebate on exported goods containing sugar, the net price is still considerably higher than world prices and it was reported to be administratively extremely difficult to obtain a rebate.

The molasses by-product is used for the production of alcohol, of which 477 tons were produced in 1953 by fermentation and distillation.

Vegetable and Fruit Canning and Preserving

Damascus is the principal center of the canning and preserving industry, the Ghouta being an important vegetable and fruit growing area. Two large factories and a smaller one, equipped with modern machinery, produce canned vegetables and fruit, dried fruit, fruit paste, fruit juices, jams, pickles, etc., manufacturing their own cans from imported tin plate. In the canning season these three factories employ about 1,200 workers in all. There are also a considerable number of small establishments in Damascus and elsewhere which produce jams, paste, juices, etc. Production varies considerably but recent estimates suggest a total output of about 4,000 tons a year.

The supply of vegetables for canning is limited and their quality could be greatly improved. The industry has suffered from the dissolution of the Customs Union with Lebanon, that country having been an important market.

As the Syrian market for canned goods is limited, the industry is very dependent on exports, but the high price of sugar makes successful compe-

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326 tition difficult. Exports of canned vegetables and fruit products without sugar, as for example dried fruits (apricots), pulp and tomato juice just now seem to offer greater possibilities, but foreign quality competition is still severe.

Cement

329 There are two cement factories in Syria, one near Damascus and one in Aleppo. Their combined capacity in 1953 was 243,000 metric tons. Planned expansions are expected to result in an increase to 403,000 tons by 1955. The two companies have about 500 factory employees, working on a continuous three-shift basis and there are about 300 additional workers in the quarries.

There are ample supplies of limestone in close proximity to each factory. The other constituent materials are readily available and are usually brought in as return loads. Refractory bricks are imported. The rotary kilns are oil fired, about 150 kg. of fuel oil being used for each metric ton of cement produced. The transport costs of fuel oil are heavy, varying from £S 10 to over £S 20 per ton.

Syrian cement now costs about £S 80 per ton ex factory, including the tax (for domestic use) of £S 15 per ton, against prices of from £S 50 to £S 70 per ton for European and Lebanese cement c.i.f. Beirut.

Glass

323 Glassmaking is one of Syria's traditional industries. Until the end of the last war, broken glass constituted its raw material and primitive hand methods were used, but production is now concentrated mainly in one large factory on the outskirts of Damascus. There are also 12 small enterprises, several of them in the Damascus area, engaged in the production of bottles, glass containers, lamp glasses, etc. Machines are used in certain processes, but production is still largely in the hands of glass blowers.

The output of the large Damascus factory, considered to be the most modern factory of its kind in the Middle East, averaged almost 4,000 tons annually during 1950-53. Sand has to be imported from Lebanon, as the local sand is unsuitable; soda ash and silica are imported from Europe and fuel oil from Lebanon. The company sells its standard window glass in